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ABSTRACT

A project entitled Enhancing the State Role in Lifelong Learning was undertaken in Kansas to enhance state-level planning and the development of policies in support of adult education. Because Kansas is one of six pilot project states participating in the Education Commission of the States (ECS) Lifelong Learning Project, a two-year data collection effort was made to bring together organizations and individuals involved in adult and continuing education, to collect background information concerning lifelong learning needs in the state, to assess benefits to the state because of the development of adult learning opportunities, and to develop an inventory or assessment of adult learning resources currently available in Kansas. After the completion of these activities, a 32-member advisory committee participated in a futures intervention workshop designed to facilitate the formulation of adult learning goals for Kansas. The eight goals developed concerned the following areas: access, learning opportunities, participation, providers, adult learning approaches, delivery mechanisms, coordination, and planning and programming. Included among the strategies developed for implementing these goals were development of a legislative resolution commending and promoting adult learning in Kansas, organization of a statewide task force to address issues raised during the project, and development of a regional pilot program involving providers as well as the public and private sectors. (MN)

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KANSAS

GOALS FOR ADULT LEARNING

Board of Regents, State of Kansas
Suite 1416, Merchants National Bank Tower
Topeka, Kansas 66612

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Inventing the Future
for
Lifelong Learning in Kansas

Introduction

Kansas is one of six pilot states participating in the Education Commission of the States (ECS) Lifelong Learning Project. The project is entitled Enhancing the State Role in Lifelong Learning. It is intended to enhance state level planning and the development of policies in support of adult education.

This report summarizes efforts to define and identify policies that enhance the development of adult education in Kansas. The report concludes by presenting a set of specific recommendations that were formulated by a statewide advisory group. The activities reported reflect guidelines or directions for adult education in Kansas through the year 2000. The intent is to provide a time line that is at once reachable and attainable and yet allows the opportunity for changes to take place for actual goal achievement.

The Kansas staff would like to take this opportunity to express appreciation to the many key personalities, both within Kansas and nationally, who contributed to the success of this undertaking. Special recognition is due the Denver based ECS project staff of Dr. William Hilton and Ms. Linda West Bing, the members of the Kansas Statewide Advisory Committee who took time from busy and active schedules to provide overall direction for the project, members of the Legislative Educational Planning Committee, the Board of Regents and the State Board of Education who supported participation in the project, and to the W. K. Kellogg Foundation who assisted significantly with financial and leadership support.

Background of the Project

Kansas efforts were devoted over a period of two years to bring together the agencies, organizations and individuals involved in adult and continuing education, provide a background of data through assessing lifelong learning needs in the state, assess benefits to the state because of adult learning opportunities and develop an inventory or assessment of adult learning resources currently available. The work has been completed successfully.

The activity was designed to provide a wealth of information that would allow the state to better identify future directions and goals. The development of the data base involved a number of people in the state and acquainted them with the project and encouraged their efforts and commitment. The information gathered was regularly presented to the Board of Regents, the State Board of Education and the Legislative Educational Planning Committee to keep them informed on the findings as well as fully abreast of the project's activities.

Coordination of the Project

The project was guided through the establishment of a coalition effort among four agencies: the Legislative Educational Planning Committee, as the statewide planning body for postsecondary education in the state; the Board of Regents representing the Universities, Kansas Technical Institute and the Medical Center; the State Board of Education representing proprietary education, community colleges, vocational-technical education and the adult education programs in public schools; and the Department of Human Resources representing the Governor's Office and creating a closer relationship between the world of work and educational effort. Since most educational effort for adults is undertaken for work related reasons or benefits, the inter-relationship with the Department of Human Resources was seen as a key factor in the project and not only necessary but highly desirable. A Steering Committee composed of the agency head and agency staff provided the executive leadership function that maintained the thrust of the project. Members of the Steering Committee included: Board of Regents, Dr. John J. Conard and Dr. Gene Kasper; Department of Education, Dr. Merle Bolton and Dr. Sam Newland; Legislative Educational Planning Committee, Mr. Richard Ryan, Ms. Carolyn Rampey and Dr. Julian Efird; Department of Human Resources, Dr. Harvey L. Ludwick and Mr. Bill Moore.

Statewide Advisory Committee - Role and Function

Early in the project, the establishment of an Advisory Committee to work with the four major agencies was seen as extremely vital to the project and a major function of project efforts. The intent was to assure representation and viewpoints from decision makers throughout the state.

An Advisory Committee of some thirty-two members was identified and expected to serve as the principal "lifelong learning" planning board for Kansas, as well as address the objectives of the project, including data collection, analysis, state policy formulation and strategies for implementation. Membership was secured from the Legislature with the Senate and the House of Representatives represented, adult education practitioners, higher education institution presidents, the Board of Education, the Board of Regents, labor, business, industry and associations relating to commerce and industry.

The Advisory Committee was an integral part of the original ECS proposal to the Kellogg Foundation and an original part of the Kansas proposal. It was effective well beyond expectations and did indeed become the center of the project as well as what is expected to be the future beyond the project. The willingness of advisory committee members to devote special effort to the project, their commitment to adult education in Kansas, and their response to address the future for adult education in Kansas were outstanding contributions and directly a measure of success for the project.

The Futures Invention Process for Goal Development

The Statewide Advisory Committee has been described earlier as the heart of the project in Kansas. That fact became abundantly clear as plans were developed to establish future goals in adult education. All of the preceding data was now available. It had been provided the Advisory Committee members at various meetings through the first two project years. It was now time to review possible approaches to goal development. After careful exploration and evaluation, a prominent futurist and outstanding adult educator* was contacted to assist the project staff in designing two futures invention workshops. The first of these workshops ran for two days on May 3-4, 1982, at the Holidome in Lawrence, Kansas. The second meeting was held over the course of a single day on June 14, 1982, at Washburn University in Topeka, Kansas. The first meeting focused on goal development and the second on implementation strategies and initiatives.

Members of the Advisory Committee were invited to participate in the workshop by noting that a song popular on the Sesame Street circuit urges youthful listeners to "picture the world the way they want it to be, then work to make it that way." That single sentiment was the essence of the invitation, as well as the essence of the workshop process, to help picture the world of adult learning in Kansas the way they want it to be. Dr. Ziegler's approach is called the Futures Invention process and has been used successfully for some years to aid in long range planning. Futures Invention is basically a process by which policy makers and community leaders can effect positive change. It involves three steps: (1) setting a desirable goal(s), (2) devising specific strategies for the achievement of the goal(s), and (3) implementing those strategies. Our immediate efforts were designed to focus on the first two steps.

The invitation letter noted that in the Futures Invention activity, each participant was invited to define desirable future goals for adult learning in Kansas. They were asked to imagine, or "image," what types of adult learning services should be available and with what level and forms (public and private) of financial support. They were challenged to draw upon their own individual insights and knowledge in defining goals that they and others agree are both feasible and desirable. In addition to defining these goals, they were asked to probe them, to test them, to evaluate fully the impacts, advantages and disadvantages of each as though they were actually living in Kansas twenty years from now when those goals might well form the foundations of public policy.

The Futures Invention process uses what many would regard as an "unrealistic" approach toward the formulation of very realistic goals. Participants are initially urged to work in isolation, as individuals, to free their minds and imaginations from the problems and preoccupations of today. Their goal is to formulate "images," ideas of a desirable future, and they are enjoined against immediately raising barriers to the achievement of those images, against thinking about all the reasons why what they <u>want</u> to happen cannot happen.

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Through a series of subsequent steps, the individuals are formed into small groups of three ("triads"), which, in turn, are merged into even larger groups. As much consensus as possible regarding future goals and directions is "invited" at each new level on which participants are aggregated. Over time, the images born of the group's creativity are sharpened. What the participants want to happen comes closer to being what they intend to happen.

Near the end of the process, the participants have ownership in a number of goals and objectives that they share. (Many other possible goals, on which consensus could not be derived, enjoy a less prominent place in the outputs of this exchange.) At the point at which these goals are most clearly accepted and understood by all, the participants experience them mentally, but vividly, as though they were actually living at a time twenty years hence, when their goals had been achieved.

The participants are then phased back into the present, when they are asked to write a "futures history," an account of how their imagined goals had come to be achieved. This documentation serves as a sort of "backward mapping" of the practical steps that policy makers today should be evaluating for possible implementation.

Certain features of the Futures Invention workshop deserve highlighting. Such sessions:

1. Derive their content primarily from the insights of the participants, rather than from prepared speeches by so-called experts;

2. Require intensive and active involvement in the planning process, including a substantial investment of time;

3. Allow participants to test the feasibility of their goal formulations by probing the advantages and disadvantages of each, a process that helps to insure the practical applicability and the "realism" of the resulting recommendations.

The role of the group facilitator is critical, especially in the assessment and analysis of the results of a Futures Invention workshop. The workshops generate a great deal of often very specific information, but those outcomes are rarely formulated with enough clarity and precision to permit their immediate publication. The responsibility for translating these outcomes into a set of recommendations that are understandable to persons who were not directly involved in these intensive deliberations rests with the group facilitator.

The recommendations which follow represent refinements of the raw material that resulted from the May and June workshops. These statements were reviewed and approved in advance by the members of the Statewide Advisory Committee who participated in the workshops. It is expected the recommendations, which represent a great deal of thought and effort on the part of the Committee, will be adopted as guides for the future expansion of adult learning opportunities in the State of Kansas.

Adult Learning Goals for Kansas

Goal 1 -- ACCESS

Lifelong Learning is for all adults and should be available to all adults.

The Advisory Committee addressed the question of access to adult learning opportunities and encouraged those educational opportunities to be available to all adults. The Educational Needs Study of Kansas Adults, which was completed earlier in the project, noted that most activities were designed for those citizens who can pay, the younger adult and those who have already participated in adult learning.

The Advisory Committee did not specify how opportunities should be available to all adults and the state does have underserved and unserved populations present such as the non-college graduate (high school graduate), the older adult, the marginal income group and minorities. Exploration of access opportunities is needed and required.

Goal 2 -- LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunities for Lifelong Learning should be available in a wide range of circumstances and settings and encourage participation by the largest number of individuals and groups.

The Advisory Committee encouraged a wide range of learning opportunities which would be available in a wide variety of circumstances and settings with participation by individuals and groups who need to participate.

To accomplish the goal, decisions will need to be made on who can provide the diversity of opportunities and cooperative effort will serve as a key to assure that diversity. Activities near learners' homes and employment which really do respond to learners' needs will be additional challenges. As more people participate, the range of learning options will need to broaden.

Goal 3 -- PARTICIPATION

The responsibility
for participation in Lifelong Learning activities rests
with the individual and/or groups to which the individual may belong.

The Committee agreed that participation should be voluntary and left to the discretion and desire of individuals and groups. They rejected the notion of compulsory adult learning and accepted mandated adult learning requirements only in areas that clearly affected societal goals.

Goal 4 -- PROVIDERS

Lifelong Learning should be provided through a mix of public and private organizations and institutions in delivery of programs and program development.

The Advisory Committee membership suggested a goal of public and private organizations and institutions in the delivery of programs and in the development of program activities. The encouragement or invitation to private intervention, initiative and investment was quite clear, although the mix between public and private was not spelled out. The mix could differ, of course, depending on geographic area in the state, number and kinds of providers in the region and student needs. It will be important to develop a system to identify who is providing what current activities and identify who can provide additional opportunities as student need dictates

Goal 5 -- ADULT LEARNING APPROACHES

To the degree possible, adult learning opportunities should be individualized, personalized, and self-directed.

Learning may take place in groups, but respond to individual needs; it may be provided through instructional or mass media delivery systems, but be personalized to account for the unique characteristics and contributions of the learner; and it may benefit societal goals such as better nursing care or medical care but be self-selected and self-directed. Advisory Committee members felt strongly that a significant program of adult education would hold these three principles as major goals for learning activities.

Goal 6 -- DELIVERY MECHANISMS

Communications technology should be a significant factor in delivery of educational opportunities for adults.

The use of recent technology, and particularly communications technology, has been significant but will be considerably more so in the future. A Kansas Electronics Media Report completed recently identifies some of the new advances affecting learning theory and instructional approaches. A goal established by the Committee strongly encourages new kinds of communication probabilities: computer sytems in the home, home computer systems tied to central systems for information, television learning programs, and video cassettes to name a few. The Educational Needs Study of Kansas citizens reported that 92 to 95% of the students prefer face-to-face instruction. Yet economy of time and natural resources strongly suggest better use of technology in subject areas that are appropriate. Computer literacy today is no longer a catch word but a necessary reality.

The opportunity to offer a mix of delivery methods should heighten the number of adults that can be served and helps to insure maximum access to learning opportunities for all adult Kansans with a consistent quality in instructional content and programming.

Goal 7 -- COORDINATION

Lifelong Learning
-- because of its variety, diversity, and multiplicity --
requires careful coordination to assure adequate and appropriate services and wise use of limited resources.

As educational opportunities are required and as more adults need to participate in activities that relate to work settings, coordination will become even more essential. That coordination should have a dual aim of promoting what is currently provided and assuring the wise use of very limited resources to serve ever expanding needs. The design of that mechanism for articulation and coordination will be part of the accomplishment of this goal.

Goal 8 -- PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING

Planning and organization for adult learning opportunities and development of programs responding to adult needs should be part of a local and/or regional base.

Regional or local identification of services available, of educational needs in the area, and a process or system to determine which providers can and will provide what service--and then as near as possible to learners in the locality--was seen as a major goal. Because of the complexity of communication, the need for realistic planning, and the need for speedy program response, the development of "local study groups" or regional councils as a promotion-coordination-communication link was highly valued by the Committee.

Strategies for Implementation

The second step in the Futures Invention process was the development of strategies to implement the goals. Essentially, Advisory Committee members tried to identify the initiatives that needed to take place in the state to be certain the goals could and would be implemented. There was consistent agreement on those "next steps":

1. Report the project and the project findings and recommendations to the officially designated bodies who encouraged and supported it. Reports were prepared and made to the Kansas Board of Regents, the State Board of Education and the Legislative Educational Planning Committee (1202).

2. Encourage the development of a conference in the state, which may take the form of a Governor's Conference on Adult Education, to involve more Kansans in thinking through the issues and goals identified. An illustrious group of Advisory Committee members participated in the project. To make their proposals work, many more practitioners, adult students, private providers and others must be involved in the process.

3. Develop and propose a legislative resolution that commends and promotes adult learning in Kansas and begins to establish a mechanism to encourage communication and coordination between public and private sectors, create possible funding options and encourage a focus on adult learning needs.

   The following legislative resolution was prepared and approved by the Legislative Educational Planning Committee, a legislative committee composed of eleven senators and representatives. It will be introduced in each house at the beginning of the legislative session in January, 1983. The resolution will serve as the basis for further legislative response to the goal statements:

   A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION requesting the Governor to establish a task force on the provision of lifelong learning opportunities for the citizens of Kansas.

   WHEREAS, Lifelong learning is a self-directed activity which includes the use of a mix of the formal and informal educational resources of society by its citizens for self-enrichment in both vocational and personal development; and

   WHEREAS, Lifelong learning enables citizens from all walks of life to be exposed to forms and aspects of cultures which are often completely foreign to them; and

WHEREAS, Lifelong learning provides the opportunity for individual citizens to explore new and diverse careers and lifestyles and thus to enhance the quality of life within society in general; and

WHEREAS, Lifelong learning opportunities could be made more readily accessible to the citizens of Kansas through both the public and the private sectors of the state by newly-created or traditional delivery systems; and

WHEREAS, The scope of the provision of lifelong learning opportunities might range from comprehensive and coordinated community-based services to self-directed learning of individual citizens utilizing various traditional resource centers; and

WHEREAS, Lifelong learning is important to the citizens of Kansas in order that they may develop to the fullest their educational, cultural, intellectual, vocational and athletic potential and thus reap substantial societal benefits for themselves individually and for the state as a whole: Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives of the State of Kansas, the Senate concurring therein: That the Legislature hereby requests the Governor to establish a task force on the provision of lifelong learning opportunities for the citizens of Kansas. The Legislature further requests the Governor to include as members of the task force, insofar as practicable, representatives of the Legislature, the State Board of Regents and the state educational institutions under its control and supervision, the State Board of Education and the educational entities and institutions under its supervision, the municipal university, private colleges and universities, free universities, local and state governmental agencies, public and private community service agencies and organizations, labor organizations, professional associations, business and industry and the public in general. In recognition by the Legislature that Kansas has been a participant state for the past two years in a project designed by the Education Commission of the States to facilitate the development of more effective state policies and the implementation of new and more adequate state practices in relation to lifelong learning and that an advisory committee was established

to address the objectives of the project, the Legislature recommends that the policies and goals formulated by the advisory committee be considered by the Governor's task force during the course of the performance of its duties and the accomplishment of its objectives with respect to the provision of lifelong learning opportunities for the people of Kansas.

Be it further resolved: That the Secretary of State is hereby directed to transmit an enrolled copy of this resolution to the Governor.

4. Organization of a state-wide Task Force or Council to address issues raised in the project report, serve as a focal point for adult education awareness, and encourage implementation and response to adult education needs in the state. Specific responsibilities include:

   a. Serving as the catalyst for designing the specific steps necessary for implementing the action steps;

   b. Maintaining a clearinghouse of information on adult learning resources and needs;

   c. Conducting research, evaluation and dissemination activities according to the demonstrated needs of both adult learners and service providers, including state and regional needs assessments;

   d. Assuming primary responsibility for publicizing the value and importance of further learning to Kansans of all ages;

   e. Establishing guidelines for the eventual establishment of a limited number of regional lifelong learning councils within the state;

   f. Serving as a conduit for funding from both public and private sources in support of regional plans and activities;

   g. Serving as a mechanism for communications and cooperation among leaders in the public and private sectors.

5. Development of a regional pilot program that will involve providers, private and public; identify what programs need to be developed; and what steps must be taken to serve all adult Kansans in that area. The regional program will serve as a model for eventual development of regional units covering the state.

Conclusion

Adult education in Kansas cuts across all organizational lines, all institutional responsibilities and all governance structures. It is expected the cooperative spirit that pervaded the project with the Education Commission of the States will continue and, through enhanced communication, involvement of numerous providers and an open, understanding response to current efforts, will lead to a significant contribution to adult education in the state.

Realization and achievement of the goals will have many results for adult learners. Some of the changes that should be expected include:

1. Establishment of regional councils that cooperatively serve geographic areas in a comprehensive, coordinated manner;

2. Completion of an assessment of the availability and most efficient and effective uses of the new communications technologies, and development of an overall strategy for use of the systems in regions and statewide;

3. State level funding incentives that respond positively to higher education institutions which are clearly providing the most effective services for adult learning needs;

4. Attraction of adults who are least well educated to the use of existing and available resources and a recognition of the value and importance of adult learning;

5. Advisory, counseling and information services well established and available to adults in major communities across the state;

6. Learning opportunities available throughout the state at times and places convenient to adult learners;

7. Learning by adults is recognized, encouraged and supported as a matter of public policy;

8. Public and private providers of learning opportunities cooperate and collaborate to assure a full range of activities and effective use of resources.

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